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RUTERSVILLE COLLEGE.

JULIA LEE SINKS.

I find from a quaint document furnished me by Mrs. Chauncey Richardson¹ and written by Mr. John Rabb, one of the original projectors of Rutersville College, that in the summer of 1838 ten members of the Methodist church, living in the upper part of the district known as Austin's Colony, agreed to purchase a league of land for the purpose of locating thereon a settlement including a college, or at least a permanent academy. The same document says that "it was first suggested by Rev. Martin Ruter, one of the first missionaries that were sent to Texas, but his death soon after prevented his undertaking with his brethren the enterprise. The village was named for him by vote of the proprietors." I give the names of six: "Robert Alexander, D. D., A. P. Manley, M. D., Mr. Robert Chappell, Mr. Franklin Lewis, Rev. William M² of the Cumberland Presbyterian church, John Rabb."

On the 23rd of September, 1838, a few of the above mentioned proprietors met, with Rev. John W. Kenney as their surveyor, and commenced to survey the village.

Rev. D. N. V. Sullivan taught the first school.

A clause in the deeds prohibited the sale of ardent spirits, and gambling.

In 1840, through the untiring efforts of Rev. Chauncey Richardson of the Methodist Episcopal church, a charter was obtained from the Texas government, and a donation of four leagues of land for the benefit of the college. The congress of Texas appointed Mr. Richardson, president. He also acted as agent for the College and obtained by donation a large quantity of land. The institution was chartered with university privileges.

Through the kindness of Mr. E. W. Crawford of Rutersville, I

¹ Wife of Rev. Chauncey Richardson mentioned further on. Now Mrs. — Van Bibber, and residing in New Orleans.

² Name rubbed out.

have been furnished with the following statistics of the College for its establishment and first term:

TRUSTEES.

Rev. Chauncey Richardson, President.

John Rabb, Treasurer.

Hon. Andrew Rabb.	Jonas Randall.
John H. King.	Joseph Nail.
James S. Lester.	Dr. A. P. Manly.
Wager S. Smith.	Dr. W. P. Smith.
Thomas D. Fisher.	

HONORARY TRUSTEES.

Hon. James Webb.	William Menefee.
Francis Moore.	G. W. Barnett.
R. Alexander.	R. B. Jarmon.

FACULTY.

Chauncey Richardson, A. M., President.

Charles W. Thomas, A. B. Tutor.

Martha G. Richardson, Preceptress.

MEMBERS AND PATRONS OF THE COLLEGE.

*Preparatory Department.*³

Alfred Alway.	Duncan Murchison.
Sarah Alway, Rutgersville.	Hon. John Murchison, Fayette County.
C. L. Blair, Rutgersville.	Joseph Mendes, ⁴ Rutgersville.
Francis Ayres.	Edwin L. Moore, Rutgersville.
Theodore Ayres.	James J. Norton.
David Ayres, Center Hill.	Dr. A. P. Manley, Rutgersville.
Lionel Brown.	William A. W. Nail.

³ Names marked with an asterisk are those of parents.

[⁴Or José María Mendez. This was a Mexican fifer boy captured at San Jacinto by Monroe Hill, whose name appears in the list above. Mendez was offered permission to return to Mexico if he chose, but he preferred to remain in Texas rather than be forced into the Mexican army again, which he feared would be the result if he went home. He lived with the family of Mr. Asa Hill, Monroe Hill's father. Afterwards he became a silver-smith in Houston, where he died of yellow fever sometime late in the 40's. These facts are furnished by Mr. Monroe Hill.—G. P. G.]

Samuel Brown, Washington	Lewis M. Nail.
J. P. Bowles. {County.	P. M. Nail.
Henry S. Bowles.	Quincy S. Nail.
E. Bowles.	Clark B. Nail.
James H. Dennis.	Joseph Nail, Rutersville.
William Evans.	Z. P. M. Rabb.
Hon. Musgrove Evans.	George W. Rabb.
Rufus Fisher.	John W. Rabb.
Thomas D. Fisher, Rutersville.	John Rabb, Rutersville.
Monroe Hill.	Charles Randall.
Asa C. Hill.	Jonas Randall, Rutersville.
John C. Hill.	Enoch B. Simons.
Asa Hill, Rutersville.	Daniel Barrett.
Constantine Killough.	Jordan Sweeny.
Mr. — Killough, Rutersville.	Mr. — Sweeny, Matagorda County.
James Matson.	James A. G. Smith.
Richard Matson.	Dr. William P. Smith, Rutersville.
Captain Fuller, Washington.	George C. Tennehill. ⁵
James L. Morrow.	J. N. McD. Thompson. ⁶
John C. C. Moore.	Alexander Thompson, Milam County. ⁷

Female Department.

Martha Ann Alway.	Sarah A. Hill.
Celia Alway.	Mary A. R. Hill.
Sarah Alway, Rutersville.	Martha A. E. Hill
Martha Davis.	Asa Hill, Rutersville.
Rev. — Davis, Rutersville.	Amanda Jarmon.
Mary A. Edwards.	Col. R. B. Jarmon, Fayette County.
Dr. M. Barrier, Rutersville.	Jane H. Kerr.
Isabella H. Fisher.	William Kerr, Washington County.
Thomas D. Fisher, Rutersville.	Mary J. A. Kerr
Col. Lee Grey, Rutersville.	George Kerr, Rutersville.
Indiana Grey.	Eliza Moore.
Angelina H. Gilbert.	Lovick L. Moore, Washington County.
Abram Gilbert.	A. M. F. Moore.
Mary H. Hall.	Edwin L. Moore, Rutersville.
E. K. Hall, Columbia.	Melissa C. Rabb.
Mary Jane Hayden, Rutersville.	John Rabb, Rutersville.
N. Caroline T. King.	Martha Reagan.
John A. King, Rutersville.	Mr. — Reagan, Rutersville.

[⁵ Mr. Hill thinks this name should be Tennell.—G. P. G.]

[⁶ Cousin to Mrs. Monroe Hill. Mrs. Hill was a member of the Female Department, her name before marriage being Jane H. Kerr. Mr. Thompson was one of those Mier prisoners who drew black beans and were shot.—G. P. G.]

[⁷ Surveyor of Austin's colony.—G. P. G.]

Elvira Nail.	Mary A. Simons.
Joseph Nail, Rutersville.	Daniel Barnett, Austin County.
Ann Sophia Richardson.	Susan C. Thompson.
Rev. C. Richardson, Rutersville.	Alexander Thompson, Milam County.
S. A. Hill.	Clarissa M. Tennehill.
L. Elizabeth Hill.	S. Ann Tennehill.
George Tennehill,* Rutersville.	

Below I give the terms of admission to the classical course. They appear to me rather astonishing, I must confess; but it was probably not expected that the sons of pioneer Indian fighters should rise to the dignity of this course for many years to come. From the force of circumstances most of them would have to enter the Preparatory Department, and the requirements for entrance into the classical course were set before them only as a mark of a higher calling. Those admitted to this course were expected to know "the English Language, Davies' Arithmetic, Davies' Algebra as far as Quadratic Equations, Ancient and Modern Geography, Latin and Greek Grammar, Caesar's Commentaries, Cicero's Select Orations, the Georgics and Aeneid of Virgil, Jacob's Greek Reader, or St. John's Gospel in Greek."

For the benefit of those who were unable to satisfy these requirements there existed the following provision: "Beginners in science and in literature will be admitted to the Preparatory Department, and also to the Female Department." This was the opening for most of those who were to profit by the school and to obtain from it all the instruction they would perhaps ever get.

In the second term the names of Rev. C. W. Thomas, A. B., Professor of Ancient Languages and Mathematics, and Mr. Thomas Bell, Tutor, appear in the list of the faculty, and there is an advance from the sixty-three students enrolled during the first term to one hundred.

Among the papers transcribed from the records of the College and furnished me is the list of the donors to its endowment fund. Gifts of land are as follows:

The Texas Congress.....	17,776 acres
Rutersville, for site of College.....	52 "
Rutersville, for Female Department.....	24 "

[*See note 5, which applies also to the two names preceding this.—G. P. G.]

Then comes a list of donations obtained by the president subsequent to May 20, 1840, the aggregate being 24,516 acres.

In addition there is a list of *subscriptions in par money*, which I transcribe exactly as it was written.

Hon. Nathan Thomas, Member of Congress.....	\$50
S. S. B. Fields.....	50
Rev. D. R. Reid, Nov. 1840.....	25
A. W. Woolsey, due May 1841.....	200
P. H. Martin, Feb. 1841.....	50
Benjamin Phillips, Nov. 1840.....	25
H. Mathews, Jan. 1842.....	500
H. A. Adams, Jan. 1842.....	100
H. O. Campbell, June 1841.....	25
J. Campbell, " ".....	25
C. B. Shepherd, May ".....	20
James Cochran, " ".....	100
J. W. Harris, June ".....	25
L. W. Groce, " ".....	100
S. V. Samothe.....	50
Mr. Bracy, Sept. 1840.....	50
W. C. & A. H. Jones, June 1841.....	25
Oliver Jones, " ".....	25
J. W. Foster, " ".....	25
William Keesee, " ".....	25
John Grey, " ".....	25
N. W. Eastland, " ".....	40
W. Y. McFarland, Sept. 1841.....	25
S. Wright, Jan. 1842.....	25
J. L., Sept. 1841.....	20
H. Woodward.....	10
Wm. Menefee.....	100
M. Yanbudeess, July 1841.....	9
W. P. Thorp, Oct. 1841.....	100
Wm. Price, " ".....	50
J. G. Wilkinson, Oct. 1841.....	100
J. C. Bridgeman, Apr.....	25
J. B. Alexander, Apr. 1841.....	25
F. W. Habert, " ".....	50
James Stephens.....	25
J. W. Kenney, 1840.....	¹⁰

Then follows a list of subscriptions in par money, payable in five annual installments, the first falling due January 1, 1842:

*Figures omitted.

¹⁰ Figures omitted.

Wm. R. Alexander	\$500
David Ayres	500
C. de Bland	500
James R. Isbell	500
John Rabb	500
R. S. McCormack	500

There is given also a list of donors to the College library:

Robert Martin, Nashville, Tenn.....	3 vols.
J. Shackelford, Courtland, Ala.....	5 “
A. Kingly, Nashville, Tenn.....	35 “
M. Eacham, “ “	10 “
Mr. Watkins, Courtland, Ala..... ¹¹	
Mr. Tice, Tuscumbia, Ala.....	5 “
H. A. Prout, “ “	9 “
D. G. Burnet, Austin City, Texas.....	14 “
Governor Polk, Tenn.....	10 “
Mrs. Caldwell, Nashville, Tenn.....	2 “

One donor, “C. Richardson,” gives to the College cabinet choice minerals and shells valued at \$600.

However much it may have been denied by those concerned in bringing about at a later time the union of the Military Institute of Galveston with the College at Rutgersville and the Monumental Committee of La Grange, the patronage and oversight of the Methodist Episcopal church shows itself throughout the early history of the College, and whatever success attended the beginnings of the institution was undoubtedly attributable to that energetic body. Of course, however, people of all denominations and of no denomination at all assisted; for it was one of the early efforts at honorable achievement in Fayette, in which all citizens of the county were interested.

The College was largely endowed with land, the gift of the State and of individuals, and there seemed never a fairer start for an educational venture. But, for want of patient waiting until time developed its resources, these very resources themselves melted away and left it too weak to become what it should have been—the alma mater of the youth of Fayette county—keeping at home the thousands that were eventually spent to build up distant schools. Even a nation in its beginnings can never take in at a glance the

¹¹ Number not given.

value of its own resources. This knowledge must be born of experience and nursed by patience and fortitude. Had the trustees at Rutgersville College encouraged these virtues in themselves, better results would have been obtained; but they did not, and much was consumed in a day which would have furnished ample provision for a great and progressive future. Though such education as met the common needs of the people was given to many, very many, who would otherwise have been without it, and though its refining influence was scattered among many homes, brightening them by its presence, yet to pay the expense land was given in part;¹² and though it was rated fairly as land was then going, the practice slowly but surely destroyed the hopes of the institution. What with the great scarcity of money, the Indian fighting, and the Mexican fighting, there came the idea that whatever was done must be done at once. This was the engrossing thought, and patience and the prospects of the College died together.

No doubt much of the land donated was given by the members of the Methodist Episcopal church, the activity of whose membership made it appear at first as if the institution were established in its interest.

For many years the College was under the control and supervision of Mr. William Halsey, Principal and Professor of Ancient and Modern Languages, assisted by Mr. Ulysses Chapman, A. M., Professor of Mathematics and Natural Science, Mrs. Mary Halsey being at the head of the Female Department. The commendation of Mr. Chapman in the quaint old document referred to at the outset is: "He is a regular classical scholar. He knows of no such words as 'I can't do it.' He can lay down his books and do anything that any other man in our village can do."

In 1856 Rutgersville College was consolidated with the Military Institute, previously located at Galveston, and the "Monumental Committee" of La Grange, and it now becomes necessary to describe briefly the objects and organization of the last. The bill for its incorporation was approved January 19, 1850, and it begins as follows: "Be it enacted by the Legislature of Texas, that Albert L. Vail, George W. Sinks, John W. Dancy, Wm. J. Russell, Isaac B. McFarland, Thomas W. Cox, John T. Cox, Hamilton Ledbetter, D. G. Gregory, A. P. Manly, Wm. G. Webb, Wm. Menefee, Wm. P. Smith, Charles S. Longcope, R. B. Jarmon, and Joseph Shaw, be,

and they are hereby constituted, a body politic and corporate, under the name and style of the 'Monumental Committee.' ” This committee was incorporated for the purpose of raising funds to build a monument to the decimated Mier prisoners and the Dawson soldiers.¹³ To accomplish this, a paper was to be established, the proceeds of which, after paying expenses, were to go to the purpose.¹⁴ Donations also were to be solicited. Among the contributors were R. B. Hudnal, (\$5.00); Thomas Owen, Arley, Warwickshire, England, (\$5.00); and John A. Green (\$25.00).

It was an early thought to have a military school connected with this enterprise, but the monument was to be first erected. That, with the people, was something tangible, and those that contributed felt a sort of proprietorship in it. The military college was a dream that found its realization only in the failure of their own cherished idea. The feeling that afterwards swept the monumental fund from its proper and legitimate channel was based, no doubt, upon the original idea of a military school, but the end shows it was a mistake; for the monument was not raised, and the school proved ephemeral.

In 1856 an agreement was signed to lease to Col. C. G. Forshey the buildings and property of Rutersville College for the purpose of removing thither the Texas Military Institute from Galveston. It was further agreed that the board of trustees of the College should, if possible, obtain legislation ratifying the contract, consolidating the Institute with the College and the Monumental Committee, and repealing the provisions of the charter which gave the Methodist conference the privilege of supplying vacancies in the board. A new charter, obtained in August, accomplished the desired consolidation. But there resulted evident dissatisfaction in the minds of many, particularly the relatives of the dead whom the monument was to commemorate. They steadfastly refused to have the remains moved from the place where they were buried to Rutersville,¹⁵ as contemplated, so that the monument, when built, should help to adorn that institution.

In defense of the change in the College, I find an article in “The

¹³ See Scarff's *Comprehensive History of Texas*, Vol. I, pp. 705-8.

¹⁴ See *THE QUARTERLY*, July, 1897, pp. 34-7.

¹⁵ See note 13.

True Issue," (a paper that followed the "The Monument," established to aid the monumental fund) of March 27, 1858, written by Captain C. S. Longcope, one of the trustees, "defending the permanency and proper conduct and successful management of the institution of Rutersville, known by the name of the Texas Monumental and Military Institute." I find also a communication to *The True Issue* from William P. Smith, one of the original Monumental Committee, saying that he had added to the monumental fund two thousand dollars,¹⁶ and being convinced that there should be a combination of utility with beauty, and having advised with several gentlemen, he had drawn up and presented to the legislature through Mr. J. L. Hill an amended charter differing from the old one in the following particulars:

1. For the name "Monumental Committee" it substituted "Monumental University."

2. Instead of a committee of sixteen it required seventy, the major part composed of distinguished gentlemen residing in different sections of the State, out of whom a minority of seven, residing mostly in and about the town of La Grange, were to constitute a business quorum.

3. The funds under the management of this committee or board were to be appropriated for the purpose of erecting suitable buildings for the Texas Monumental University. The board was to have the privilege of educating in languages, science, and military tactics, indigent youths of the State, and especially the sons of the fallen heroes of the Texas Revolution.

This seems laudable, but the fact is that much had been subscribed by the relatives of the dead to whom the monument was to be erected, and the transfer without their consent appears like a breach of trust. It is singular, too, that one individual could exercise the right to draw up an amendment to the charter of a corporate body in which so many were joined and get it before the legislature without the concurrence of the others. This action was doubtless taken with the counsel and by the direction of the trustees, though it is not so stated; for those who thought the monument ought to be considered first had withdrawn, and had been replaced by those who were favorable to the change.

¹⁶ One thousand was given by the Texas legislature.

Aside from the disappointment caused by the diversion of the monument fund from its original purpose, the people felt very kindly towards Colonel Forshey and his faculty, with the exception of some members of the Methodist church who, remembering their former labors in behalf of the College, could not give up the idea that it of right ought to belong to their denomination. But investigations were made, and it was fully proved by the testimony of Rev. John Haynie, himself a Methodist, and of others, that, however much the progress of the institution, and almost its existence, in its early days, was due to the energy of Methodist ministers and the liberality and patronage of Methodist people, the church as an organization had no legal right to the property. The success of the reorganized school seemed quite satisfactory, and it really had a look of permanency. The great popularity of Colonel Forshey's two assistants, Colonel Timmons and Major Thornton, both men of genius, helped it no little. Colonel Forshey in his annual report in 1859 says: "The success we have had—and it has been unspeakably gratifying—has been in spite of hostility. We have without any organized or associated patronage advanced the Institute in a little more than three years from a private school with seven pupils to the dignity of a college with more collegiate students now than any institution in the State, and certainly more than any of the same age, and we have graduated a class of our own material on the spot where sixteen years' effort of the previous organization had never been able to arrange collegiate classes."

Sixteen years of primary teaching had perhaps helped to prepare the way. Let us not despise the day of small things.

The short life of the reorganized institution was attributable in great measure to the war of Secession. Its students approaching graduation heard the shrill clarion with uplifted heads and prepared to depart. Though the last commencement address—or near the last—by the Hon. Ashbel Smith was eloquent for the Union, it fell on ears and hearts instinct with the desire for war, and its lesson bore no fruit.